

Vermont WIC
Annual Grocer Training
Effective October 2020

MODULE 3
Provide
Excellent
Customer
Service



1. Be Your Best



1. Be Your Best

Treat all customers equally

- Offer WIC customers the same courtesies offered to other customers, including:
 - Store bonus or savings cards
 - Manufacturer and store savings coupons
 - Sales and “buy 1, get one free” promotions
 - Incentive items: (must be free or under \$1.99 cost to grocer) including, but not limited to: food items, merchandise, or services.

Cashiers and Customer Service Representatives

- Cashiers play a major role in WIC's partnership with Grocers.
- Cashiers are the ambassadors of WIC; you are the face families see when purchasing their WIC food.
- Cashiers are a resource families depend on. The more familiar you are with WIC, the more you can share that expertise and offer the best customer service.

1. Be Your Best

Respect WIC Customers' Confidentiality

- Do not use the word “WIC” during the transaction, even if the family does so first. Use “benefit” or “card” instead.
- No PA announcements such as “*Need help for WIC lane #4.*”
- **Choose a code word** that works for your team and train staff to use it when they need assistance.

1. Be Your Best

Treat all customers equally

- In accordance with federal law and USDA policy, authorized WIC grocers are prohibited from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.
- Do not discriminate against:
 - WIC customers
 - Parents or caretakers of infants or children in WIC
 - Proxies of WIC customers

1. Be Your Best

Tips for staff


- **Be pleasant.**
 - Make sure your body language and tone of voice, as well as your actual words are welcoming
- **Be patient.**
 - A WIC transaction takes longer than other transactions as the system must direct connect to the EBT host
- **Be respectful.**
 - Don't break confidentiality rules by mentioning WIC during the transaction

1. Be Your Best

What if a WIC customer is disrespectful?

If a WIC customer or their proxy is physically or verbally abusive to store staff:

- Follow store policy regarding abusive customers.
- You may contact the WIC Help desk directly 802-863-7333.
- You may submit a comment form to WIC@Vermont.gov



The image shows a 'Vermont WIC Program Comment Form' tilted at an angle. The form includes the WIC logo with the tagline 'We nourish families.' and the title 'Vermont WIC Program Comment Form'. It contains several sections for user input: 'Filed by:' with fields for Name/Title, Store Name, Location/Address, and City/Town; 'Comments about:' with fields for Family, Family Name, Last 4 digits of WIC card, and Incident Date; a section for 'May we contact you regarding this incident?' with Yes/No options and a telephone field; a large text area to 'Describe the nature of the issue'; a section for 'Is this a new or ongoing issue?'; a 'Describe Incident Resolution:' section; contact information for the Vermont Department of Health - WIC Program; a 'Thank you' message; and a 'State use:' section with fields for Incident Form received by, Received by, and Date Received. The date '10/1/2015' is printed at the bottom left of the form.

1. Be Your Best

Continue training

- Customer service training should be reinforced throughout the year, especially in stores that have few WIC sales.

2. Feedback from Secret Shoppers



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“Very friendly cashier. Easy transaction with WIC items. No issues. Cashier interacted with my daughter and gave her a free apple!”

“The cashier saw that I did not have much and three kids with me and opened a register to help me get in and out faster!”

“When asked what wasn’t covered, cashier stated she didn’t know.”

“Very impersonal cashier – never smiled or made eye contact.”

“Cashier was too busy talking with other employees to tell me anything.”

“No whole wheat pasta choices.”

3.

Non-Discrimination Statement

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- In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

3. Non-Discrimination Statement

- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

3. Non-Discrimination Statement

- To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) fax:

(202) 690-7442;

or

(3) email:

program.intake@usda.gov

- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.